

## **BBL Podcasts**

### **Summer 2022 – Summer Series**

#### **Episode 1 – The Summer of Mental Health**

**Details:** Join students from the University of South Alabama as they meet with mental health expert, Dedra Byas, who explores the answer to the question, "How do you take care of your mental health during the summer?" Kick your feet back, get ready to laugh, grab some popcorn and let's come together to explore this topic!

#### **Transcript:**

#### **0:04**

Everyone welcome back to real issues.

Real talk for students by students.

My name is Connor.

Through tell in my name is Lauren Johnson and oh boy, do we have a amazing episode for you guys?

We know it has been a minute since anything has come out on our channels, decide from the archive series, which you guys really did love, and all of the support we got for that series was amazing.

#### **0:26**

So, thank you guys so much.

But today we have a really, really great episode Lauren's first inaugural episode of The new co-host for real issues, real talk.

And for this episode, we decided that we wanted to focus on Mental Health, especially mental health over the summer and how college students kind of tackle that topic and we are so, so grateful to be joined by someone who's familiar with the show, who helped us out a lot in our last season, Miss Dedra bias, who is back once again from the University counseling and testing center.

#### **1:00**

These are do you want to go ahead and just introduce yourself and tell the world a little bit?

About yourself.

Sure, my name is Deidre bias.

I am a counselor here in counseling and testing new to the state of Alabama only been here a year and only been at South a year, but absolutely love the area rule of our students.

### **1:24**

And I'm just happy to be a part of the team here.

And I mean, hey you've done great work for South and for the state of Alabama in your short time here.

I mean shit, I don't know anyone that counseling and testing center, who's done more for students on campus, than you expect me with all the Outreach work, you do with jss in and all sorts of other organizations.

### **1:46**

So, huge round of applause for everything you do.

Thank you so much.

All right.

So should we just go ahead and jump right into the episode?

Let's jump in.

Alright, so Lauren Do you want to you want to kick us off?

Absolutely.

Um, so we're curious when it comes to mental health, over the summer, is there anything specific that?

### **2:06**

You see like, any specific problems issues there.

They're pretty much the same.

You know, the same issues that we address with students during the fall and spring, same issues in the summer.

So nothing different.

### **2:24**

The only difference is that some students are leaving to go back.

Into environments that may have caused either the trauma or may, you know, have triggered their depression or anxiety.

So those are things that we have to be mindful of with students, especially if they have nowhere else to go.

## **2:44**

But back into that environment.

Yeah.

So you mentioned like having nowhere else to go for these students that you see during like the fall and spring the summer time I mean over like 50 percent of the student population leave Yves campus.

Sure, you know during the summer you can walk around and see, like there's very, very few people here.

## **3:04**

What happens to those students has those students that were seeking Services during the fall and spring when they go back home, do you work to like connect them with people in their area?

Or what is your role kind of fit in there?

All of that.

So if they still live in Mobile or they're going to be, you know, here during the summer, we still see them like we would have, you know, saw them during Fall or spring semester so that doesn't change if they're in the state of Alabama.

## **3:33**

They can still receive Services, we can do a zoom.

So we'll set up Zoom appointments and so you know their therapy continues we do have a lot of students however that live out of state and so what we will do is we will connect them with resources in their area before they leave and try to get them set up.

## **3:58**

Up.

We do have some students who don't want to see anyone but the counselor that they do things.

So, you know, we try to figure out, you know, what we can do, what resources, we can give them with coping strategies, we can give them just to kind of get them over and hold them over until they're able to get back, but we still give them those resources that are available.

#### **4:25**

They are just in case something happens, right?

I'm just kind of like thrown to the wolves and say, absolutely you can make it until the fall right?

Yeah.

Holla at me when you see me know exactly use the skills we taught you and counsel even you're right.

Oh yeah, good luck, good luck, pretty fly.

#### **4:44**

So you mentioned that there's not like a huge uptick in cases during the summer and that you kind of see the same thing.

Is there anything though that's unusual that you've seen this summer so far?

Like do you see I guess what I'm trying to get as like during the summer.

#### **5:01**

Everyone's going to the beach, everyone's hanging out with their friends.

Do you see an uptake and like body image cases, like body dysmorphia?

Do you see more like self-deprecation, anything like that or is it all just like constant?

Like the same things?

#### **5:18**

Yeah, it's pretty constant.

You know, if anything increases, it's probably the depression and anxiety, which, of course Those can very well cause or bleed into, you know, body dysmorphic disorder.

### **5:36**

You know, a lot of students are concerned about getting that swimsuit figure and being ready for the beach and being, you know, ready for the hot girls summer.

So I'm falling.

I'm falling victim to try.

Oh yeah.

### **6:00**

No problem students can feel peer pressure by other people, you know, especially when they go to the beach or they go to areas and, you know, they they may already have some self-esteem issues about how they look and so when they go into environments like that, it kind of heightens that for them.

### **6:26**

So yeah, those are Alright, sometimes that we see.

Do you have any suggestions?

Because I'll be the first to admit, like when I go to the beach, that's when my self-esteem issues really come out.

It's a horrible.

I know a lot of students probably feel that way to do you have any suggestions for things?

### **6:46**

We can do to like feel more comfortable?

Yes.

Well, yes, I just loaded question but the ideas because it could, it could range depending On the student and what, you know issues, they may be already dealing with but just across the board.

### **7:05**

One of the things that I suggest is just trying to focus on yourself.

Keep your eyes on.

You keep your mind on, you keep your thoughts on you.

When you find yourself either drifting or starting to think about, oh, wow, she looks really good and that swimsuit.

### **7:24**

I wish my butt looks like that and you know it.

So when you started Have those thoughts, you know, try to catch those and then, you know, bring it back to yourself and remind yourself that you.

Are you your find the way that you are and you're okay.

And sometimes, it's just constantly reminding yourself of those things.

### **7:45**

That's just something simple across the board but again it's really going to depend on.

It's going to vary based on, you know, maybe some other issues that they may be dealing with because you know for a person that is suffering from From anxiety or that's OCD or, you know, major depression.

### **8:02**

That's not something, very easy that they can keep themselves.

Few more complications into the actual say.

So overall, it's always best to seek out help from a professional.

Yes, yes.

### **8:18**

Because those are things that you can't just work on during the summer.

It just addressed during the summer, they're not going to be a 30 minute mindfulness Tick-Tock.

That's kind of, like Yeah, we we change your outlook on life.

No, not not going to work.

Yeah, and we're talking about seeking out, professional help and making sure we connect these students with these resources over the summer, no matter where they are.

**8:40**

Do you see students taking advantage of those resources or having an adequate access to those resources, consistently or do you think sometimes they fall off once they do leave South Campus.

For the most part, they continue their services, we have a really hard time terminating clients when they have met their goals.

**9:04**

You know, that's one of the things that we look at when they first come in and start therapy, you know, what are your goals?

What are some things you want to work on and toward?

And so we work, we use that to work with students.

And oftentimes, you know, once those goals have been completed They're not ready to leave yet.

**9:24**

So you know our job is there because it's the to work ourselves out of a job so that you can sustain but that doesn't always work.

Yeah.

You guys are one of the few careers where it's like, success is measured by us.

Losing clients getting exactly.

**9:42**

Yeah.

So I assume you're familiar with foam, right?

The fear of missing out.

Yes, okay.

Over the summer.

This is just something I've noticed with like, my friends and stuff to is that fear, really has an uptake and it can lead to some very Bad behavior in detrimental act.

**10:10**

Do you think there's any correlation between?

Like mental health, the desire to fit in, not wanting to, you know, seem out of place in the summertime is any of that making sense to you like, are you kind of tracking with how I'm?

**10:28**

Yeah.

Yeah.

And absolutely, absolutely, you know, I think the the foundation and kind of the root of that is self esteem and not wanting to stand out, not wanting to appear different.

**10:46**

For some students, you know, they, they want to fit in, they need friends, they want people around them.

And so, in order to do that, there are different things that they engage in, and that they do.

So that, you know, they can get that attention, attention, seeking, you know, behaviors and things of that nature.

**11:08**

So, oh, absolutely gotcha.

Do you think it's more?

Well, now, I guess I'm going to be more rampant Over the summer, I would say like pretty consistent right?

Probably, but, you know, one thing as a, you know, as you're saying that and I'm thinking as well, you know, a lot of these, these things we may not be aware of because students leave and these things are happening where they are, Sometimes they come back and give us the real report and sometimes they don't.

**11:41**

So sometimes they're just like, I had a good summer, right?

Yeah.

Well yeah, which it rarely ever does.

But that's neither here nor there.

Yeah yeah.

Do you think any of these kind of?

**11:58**

Like I guess to put them vulnerable acts and follow behaviors that occur over the summer cause them to come worse in the fall.

Do you ever see like someone decline in their progress after the summer when they come back?

I have not so much with South students because this will be my first I guess for summer working here and coming into the fall semester, right.

**12:23**

But I've worked at a previous institution and absolutely and those are behaviors, that usually will surface in the fall.

We would see an increase and suicidal behaviors, we saw an increase and alcohol and drug use and then it Paper of at the beginning of the the spring semester but it was almost like a cycle.

**12:52**

So we knew that there were certain certain things that were going to occur in the fall semester.

After kids came back in the summer you think there are any preventive measures that we can take to maybe like break that cycle.

**13:08**

Or is it just a consistency that has always been and always will be Pretty much.

I think if we could break it, it would be broken by now.

Um, no.

It's, we can only educate, you know, so much.

And we can only give students so much.

**13:25**

But, you know, it's those external factors that are out there and the environments that they're going back into that, sometimes have more influence over, you know what we're doing, and you know, the things that we're practicing as far as coping.

### **13:42**

And dealing with things here.

So, you know, when students go back into that environment, often times they fall back into some of those bad behaviors.

They'll become a cycle almost.

Yeah.

Cuz I mean I'll be honest I guess during the summertime I'm not around as many people that would lead me to pursue those bad behaviors.

### **14:06**

So there is kind of a uptake in the fall and then it tapers off towards the end of the semester.

When, you know, you really have to like, grind for your studies.

And, you know, I'm totally like shooting myself in the foot here, by saying this.

But, you know, we have to talk about these issues and be honest.

So, I mean, I totally see where that cycle would definitely have a very hard time to break, and we're over the summer, there's no real like predictability to exactly And we talked about how we can only educate so much.

### **14:35**

And speaking of education for our students who are listening and even for me, what are some good just in general across the board coping mechanisms, when you feel yourself kind of falling into a little, of a self-esteem issue, or feeling a little bit.

Lonely, a little bit down or depressed looking towards anxiety, Etc.

### **14:53**

Well, you know, different things work for different students so there's not, you know, one particular thing that's going to work for everybody, but what I see.

Suggest is just that students find what has worked for them in the past.

Normally this is not something that is new.

### **15:10**

They've dealt with this before but what are some things that they enjoy doing?

What are some things that you know, really puts them in a different headspace makes them feel good, you know, gets their mind off of what is going on at that moment and then just indulging those things.

### **15:32**

It can be something as simple as you know, Finding funny cat videos, you know, if that is what it takes for you to laugh and feel better, then do those things.

So, you know, I encourage students to just really think about themselves.

### **15:51**

What works for you, what is it that you like and that you enjoy doing, I've had a student in the past.

You know that mentioned she loves fat babies now it's like let's go.

Of some fat babies, you know, we created a library of different, little funny videos of fat babies, and so they start to feel anxious or depressed or feeling down, they go to those those videos.

### **16:19**

So, do you have anything that you, like, default to you as a coping mechanism?

Honestly, in my own Journey when I was going through, like, some hard times in high school, I actually started like journaling because it would feel like And too many thoughts in my head so I would put them on paper and would like, relax me.

### **16:36**

It gave me something to physically do with my fidgety hands.

So that's what I've actually been doing for years that or I will just sit outside and find a moment of peace.

I tell my roommate all the time.

She thinks I'm so funny because I will go out onto the balcony of our apartment and just sit down and stare at a tree, because it's just the pretty little piece of nature that's in front of me and it was absolutely calm me down.

**16:59**

You know, one of my old friends, her mom used to tell her Erwin should be really stressed out just go outside.

Put your feet in the grass, and eat a banana.

Like that was her thing.

And it sounds like so out there, like, what the heck?

But no, it like worked every single time I tried it once and I can say it really did.

**17:15**

Relax me, I think when you put your feet on the dirt, I don't subscribe to that.

That's a little too far out there for me.

Um I hate to say it, I'm a classic gin 0 whenever I get really anxious or depressed could just go on to Talk which is like the worst thing to do because you could see something that's going to trigger it more but nine times out of 10, you're going to see those like, you know, little funny videos.

**17:39**

I distracted we s sorcerer.

Absolutely.

And you mentioned journaling.

That's another awesome thing to do because you're getting those thoughts out of your head and for those students who, you know, maybe they don't have their journal with them all the time or maybe they don't like writing, you know, you can record yourself.

**18:01**

Laughs, you know, just over for ya, so that you still get those thoughts out.

Yeah, I mean, that's all I great advice.

I'll have to try some of those.

It seemed a little healthier than just scrolling through Tick-Tock for a few hours.

I guess.

Honestly.

I like the recording a little bit because if you get like stressed out, you want to do something.

### **18:20**

Like, I know, like you like driving, like you'll go out and you'll go for like a night drive or something.

You get stressed out.

You can start recording yourself.

And you can just rant in the car.

Absolutely.

See, I just feel like I do Weird stairs on the rare.

How are they gonna know?

I don't know, it's just exactly how would they.

### **18:42**

So, you know, we're kind of approach that like 20 minute Mark.

So we're going to start wrapping things up here a little bit.

But is there anything in particular about mental health overall that you would like to convey to students anyone who might stumble upon this episode?

### **19:01**

Who might be looking Looking for coping mechanisms, wanting to know if it's okay to seek help.

If you know there's any little tidbits of advice or you know, nuggets of wisdom, you want to throw out, now's your chance.

Well, you know, one thing I want to say is, please seek help.

### **19:20**

No one is exempt from life and life happens to everybody.

But so many people No steal don't feel comfortable, you know, talking to someone that they don't know or just admitting that, you know, they're struggling or they have a problem.

**19:43**

And we also see and hear from students that say, well, you know, my problem isn't as big as someone else's, we don't care.

We just want you to seek the help, it is here and so come in and get help, it doesn't matter if you You don't really know what's going on or you don't know how to put it into words.

**20:06**

That is absolutely fine.

We're trying to figure that out and help you through that.

So the first step is just walking through the door and then we'll take it from there.

So just seek help.

Do you think that that is the biggest barrier as to why people do not seek help?

**20:22**

Is that they deem what they're going through?

Not as bad as others.

Absolutely, I hear it all the time.

Well, I didn't want to come in because Then want to take up somebody else's time, who you know really needs it.

We have plenty of people here and everybody, you know, is available for whoever needs it.

**20:44**

So just come in, you know, you don't have to suffer in silence, you don't have to suffer alone, that's what we're here for.

I'm solutely.

Well, Lawrence or anything.

You'd like to add other than thank you so much for joining us.

**21:00**

I really enjoyed talking with you.

Oh you're so welcome.

I enjoy speaking with both of you.

Well, thank you very much.

Thank you for coming back and blessing.

The real issues.

Real talk with your presence again of you who are ever seeking out information.

### **21:18**

About USA counseling and testing services.

Their website is available.

You just got ass off, I'll be able to edu if you can locate them on the page.

And always reach out and get in contact with a counselor and get help any way, shape, or form that you need.

They will connect you with the right resources, ladies and gentlemen, this has been Lauren Johnson's first episode.

### **21:39**

Thank you so much for being patient with me.

Yeah, struggling with the growing pains a little bit, but it's okay.

We'll get it all buffed out.

You did an amazing job once again.

Thank you so much Deidre for joining us and sharing your wisdom on this very important topic.

Absolutely.

### **21:55**

As always, everyone.

Thank you guys for listening from home and tuning in.

We know it's been a minute since you've heard from us, but we have a lot of great things coming.

If you are interested in any of our old podcasts, you can find us every single place podcast are streamed.

Whether that be apple music Anchor Spotify, Amazon.

**22:11**

You name it were on there.

We hope to catch you guys in the next one.

Thank you very much.

Bye.

All